

Message Text

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SUBJECT: PROVINCIAL PROFILE: TRAPANI

1. SUMMARY: A RECENT TRIP TO TRAPANI PROVINCE PRODUCED IMPRESSIONS OF SOLID ECONOMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN AGRICULTURE AND THE FISHING INDUSTRY AGAINST A BACKDROP OF CONFUSION AND CONCERN ABOUT THE POLITICAL FUTURE. END SUMMARY. THE WESTERNMOST OF SICILY'S NINE PROVINCES, TRAPANI PROVINCE HAS A POPULATION OF CA 400,000 (LABOR FORCE: 120,000) AND THREE PRINCIPAL URBAN CENTERS: TRAPANI, MARSALA AND MAZARA DEL VALLO. THE PROVINCE'S ECONOMY IS BASED ON AGRICULTURE, FISHING, MARBLE-QUARRYING, AND TOURISM. RELATIVELY PROSPEROUS BY SICILIAN STANDARDS, THE PROVINCE HAS A PER CAPITA ANNUAL INCOME OF CA. 1.3 MILLION LIRE. LONG-FAMOUS FOR ITS MARSALA WINE, THE TRAPANI

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AREA HAS SUBSTANTIALLY EXPANDED ITS VINEYARDS IN RECENT YEARS AND BY DINT OF SUBSTANTIAL REGIONAL AND OTHER FUNDING NOW HAS A GROWING NUMBER OF COOPERATIVES PRODUCING BOTTLED WINES WHICH ARE GROWING IN ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE VIS A VIS THE TRADITIONAL BULK-EXPORT OF "CUTTING" WINES TO FRANCE. THE PROVINCE ALSO, HOWEVER, REPORTEDLY HAS ITALY'S HIGHEST PER CAPITA SUGAR CONSUMPTION RATE, MUCH OF IT DESTINED FOR LESS LEGAL FORMS OF THE VINTNER'S ART. APPROACHING
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AGRICULTURE IN ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE IS THE ACTIVE FISHING INDUSTRY CENTERED AT MAZARA DEL VALLO WHERE MORE THAN 300 TRAWLERS HARVEST AN ANNUAL CATCH ESTIMATED AT NEARLY \$100 MILLION IN VALUE. THE MAZARA FLEET OPERATES ONLY IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AND EXTENSIVELY IN THE STRAITS OF SICILY WHICH SEPARATES THIS ISLAND FROM TUNISIA AND LIBYA WHERE FISHING RIGHTS AND TERRITORIAL JURISDICTION ARE SEEDS OF POSSIBLE INTERNATIONAL FRICTION (SEPTTEL).

3. IN THE PROVINCE'S POLITICS, THE COMMUNISTS, AT 27 OF THE VOTE, ARE CLOSE TO THE ISLAND'S AVERAGE WHILE THE DC AT 38 IS SOME FOUR PERCENT BELOW THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC VOTE ISLAND-WIDE. PERHAPS TO A GREATER EXTENT THAN ELSEWHERE IN SICILY, THE DISTANCE BETWEEN THE MAJOR PARTIES IS OCCUPIED BY THE INTERMEDIARY PARTIES WITH THE REPUBLICANS RELATIVELY ABOVE THE ISLAND'S AVERAGE AT 5 AND THE PSI

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LIKELIKE AT 11 . THOUGH STRANGE HYBRIDS ARE FAIRLY FREQUENT FEATURES OF SICILIAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT, UNUSUAL ALLIANCES IN THE LARGER TOWNS PROVIDE CLEAR EVIDENCE THAT WHEN GUIDELINES ARE CONFUSED AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL, ABERRATIONS ARE EVEN MORE LIKELY TO OCCUR IN THE PROVINCES. THE MAYOR OF TRAPANI, FOR EXAMPLE, HAS RECENTLY RESIGNED FOLLOWING DIVISIONS WITHIN THE DC PROMPTED BY HIS ELECTION WITH FULL COMMUNIST SUPPORT OVER THE OPPOSITION OF CONSERVATIVE ELEMENTS IN HIS OWN PARTY. MARSALA, THE PROVINCE'S MOST POPULOUS TOWN, AT 80,000 IS GOVERNED BY A SOCIALIST MAYOR AND A CITY GIUNTA COMPRISING EVERYONE, INCLUDING THE LIBERALS, BUT THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS AND THE MSI. MAZARA DEL VALLO (40,000) HAS A COMMUNIST MAYOR WHOSE COALITION CONSISTS OF HIS OWN PARTY PLUS THE PSI, PSDI AND THE REPUBLICANS. INCIDENTALLY, FOR THOSE WHO OFFER COMMUNIST MAYORS AS PARADIGMS OF GOOD GOVERNMENT AND STREET CLEANLINESS, WE OFFER MAZARA DEL VALLO AS AN UNTIDY ANTIDOTE.

4. WITHIN THE PARTIES, THE DC IS DOMINATED IN LEADERSHIP, IF NOT IN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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NUMBERS, BY THE MOROTEL. THIS IN PART REFLECTS THE POWER LONG-WIELDED IN THE PROVINCE BY MORO'S CLOSE ASSOCIATE AND MANY-TIME MINISTER, THE LATE BERNARDO MATTARELLA WHOSE SON IS CURRENTLY PRESIDENT OF THE SICILIAN REGION. MAZARA DEL VALLO IS ALSO THE HOMETOWN OF REPUBLICAN

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DEPUTY ARISTIDE GUNNELLA WHOSE EXERCISE OF POWER AND PATRONAGE HAS KEPT LOCAL PRI STRENGTH AT A LEVEL HIGHER THAN THE NATIONAL AVERAGE. 5. DURING A SERIES OF CALLS ON POLITICAL, BUSINESS AND AGRICULTURAL LEADERS IN TRAPANI, MARSALA AND MAZARA DEL VALLO, FEBRUARY 16-18 WE NOTED A CONSIDERABLE DEGREE OF OPTIMISM ABOUT THE PROVINCE'S ECONOMIC PROSPECTS. THERE WAS LITTLE OPTIMISM ABOUT THE POLITICAL FUTURE, HOWEVER, WITH LOCAL PROJECTIONS REFLECTING ABOUT AN EQUAL MIX OF CONFUSION AND PESSIMISTIC CONCERN. WHILE OUR SAMPLING WAS PERFORCE LIMITED THERE SEEMED NO RESIDUAL CONFUSION ABOUT WHERE THE U.S. STANDS ON EUROCOMMUNISM. INDEED, MOST OF THOSE WITH WHOM WE TALKED, INCLUDING THOSE WHO HAVE PARTICIPATED IN ANOMALOUS ALLIANCES AT THE LOCAL LEVEL APPLAUDED U.S. CLARITY AND SHARED (AT LEAST PRIVATELY) OUR CONCERNS ABOUT THE PCI'S TRUE CHARACTER AND INTENTIONS. NEITHER, HOWEVER, ARE IDEAS VERY CLEAR ABOUT POSSIBLE REMEDIES. THE BISHOP OF MAZARA VOL-

UNTEERED THAT THE CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATS SHOULD RESOTRE PARTY CREDIBILI-
TY BY RUTHLESS REJUVENATION AT THE LEADERSHIP LEVEL, AND A DC (RUF-
FINI) MEMBER OF THE SICILIAN REGIONAL ASSEMBLY SAW EARLY ELECTIONS AS
THE ONLY WAY OUT IF THE PCI INSISTS ON GOING BEYOND FORMER LIMITS ES-
TABLISHED FOR THE DC-PCI "CONFRONTO". THROUGHOUT OUR CONVERSATIONS,
HOWEVER, IT WAS CLEAR THAT EVERYTHING, FROM THE FORMULA OF LOCAL

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GOVERNMENTS TO THE FORTUNES OF INDIVIDUAL SICILIAN NATIONAL AND
LOCAL POLITICAL FIGURES, WAS AWAITING THAT CLARIFICATION IN THE NAT-
IONAL POLITICAL PICTURE WHICH WOULD SORT OUT THE SHIFTING PERSONAL
POWER RELATIONSHIPS WHICH ARE CENTRAL TO SICILIAN POLITICAL LIFE.
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COLLINS.

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